

Military Families and Eligibility in the Child Nutrition Programs

PURPOSE:

To clarify the child nutrition policy on the treatment of establishing eligibility for households who have family members deployed in long-term military campaigns overseas.

SCOPE:

Participants in the Child Nutrition Programs which includes the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program for Children

EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICY:

This policy will remain in effect until rescinded or replaced by legislation, regulation, or future policy and affects households by making special accommodations for free and reduced-price eligibility determinations, tier I day care home determinations, and meal benefits for children temporarily residing with their day care home provider.

DESCRIPTION:

Household size:

For determining household size, deployed service members should be considered as family members living apart on a temporary basis and considered a household member. A school or an institution would instruct families to include the name of the deployed military personnel on Application for Free or Reduced-price Meals. The determining official would count the service member as part of the household in establishing a child's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals, or a day care home provider's eligibility for tier I reimbursement rates.

Figuring Income:

Under current policy, household members who are *temporarily absent* from their household are to be considered household members, and their income is included with other household income when making an eligibility determination. Household members not living with the household for an extended period of time or living overseas are not included as members of the household for eligibility purposes, and only that portion of their income made available by them or on their behalf to the household is counted as income to the household.

However, until this policy is replaced, USDA is allowing an exception to current policy on determining household income and size for deployed service members. Therefore, only that portion of the deployed service member's income made available by them or on their behalf to the household will be counted as income to the household.

Additional clarification for Sponsors of the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

Deployment of a parent or guardian may also affect the eligibility of a child, who temporarily resides with a day care home provider, to receive meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Although the child may live with the provider while the service member is deployed, the child would not be considered a "provider's own" child. In this special situation, the child would continue to participate in the meal service as a nonresidential participant. To claim reimbursement for program meals the day care home provider must have power of attorney, custody, or an agreement established by the military to provide residential care to the child.

SOURCE:

USDA, School and Community Nutrition Programs, Policy #05-13, dated January 19, 2005

USDA, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Policy #05-08, dated January 19, 2005

USDA, Summer Food Service Program for Children, Policy #05-05, dated January 19, 2005